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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY ARMITAGE, EUR A/S JONES, EUR PDAS
RIES AND EUR/ERA ALLEGRONE

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SUBJECT: USEU SCENESETTER FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY VISIT JUNE
1-2: EU ASPECTS

1. Sensitive but unclassified -- entire text.

2. Summary: You are coming to Brussels during a time of transition in the EU as it absorbs its new members and moves towards a new Parliament, new Commissioners and a new Constitutional Treaty. At the same time, the EU under the Irish Presidency is in the home stretch towards the forthcoming US/EU Summit next month. In addition to co-chairing the Sri Lanka's Donor Co-Chair meeting, you will be meeting with EU foreign policy czar Javier Solana. You will also informally meet with Commission Foreign Relations Head and fellow Sri Lanka meeting co-chair Chris Patten. Both Solana and Patten are under consideration for future leadership positions in the "next" European Union. Solana and his office are heavily involved in US/EU Summit preparations and Solana will be very interested in engaging with you on Iraq, the Mid-East Peace Process and Bosnia. End Summary

Co-Chair Chris Patten: Lame Duck, Or Future Commission President?

3. There is real drama, from a Brussels perspective, about the future of your fellow European Commission Co-chair, Chris Patten, who is winding down his activities in Brussels as Commissioner for External Relations, and has already begun his next (unpaid) position at Oxford. Patten has been a strong RELEX Commissioner, and very helpful in swaying his Commission colleagues to move on key US concerns in the Balkans and the fight against terrorism. He played a crucial role in brokering a substantial EU commitment for Iraq reconstruction at the Madrid Conference, and also maintained Commission support for development needs in Afghanistan. Recently, Patten's name has been frequently mentioned as a possible compromise candidate to replace Romano Prodi as the next President of the European Commission, but weak French language skills may hurt his chances of gaining French support) despite the open backing of Valery Giscard d'Estaing.

4. On the margins of the conference, you may wish to raise other issues with Patten. He will be keenly interested in our views on developments in the Middle East, and should be pressed to preview for you the Commission's Medium-term strategy for assistance to reconstruction in Iraq. You should also sound him out on the availability of funds to assist the Palestinian Authority should Sharon follow through on his promises to withdraw from Gaza. Patten can be a useful channel to his Commission colleagues on other issues of immediate concern to the US, including Romanian adoptions (where Enlargement Commissioner Gunther Verheugen has the lead), although this issue does not fall directly in Patten's purview.

EU's Transition Overload

5. Patten's own transition mirrors a general sense of flux and change that permeates the EU at this moment. At the beginning of May, the EU finalized its largest and most challenging enlargement, welcoming ten new members to the Union. These ten countries, all significantly poorer and for the most part ardently transatlantic in their outlook, are likely to change the dynamic of the Union precisely at a time when many other changes are in the offing. We should not expect that the entry of these new members will somehow tilt the EU to automatically become more pro-US. The Commission, the EU's executive body, has already become a lame duck. In the middle of June, the Irish Presidency will announce the agreed replacement for Prodi. Whoever that is) and the field still appears wide open) will be charged with naming a new Commission. Several of the most influential Commissioners (including Patten and Trade mandarin Pascal Lamy) have already announced they will not return to ministerial posts.

6. In June, voters across Europe will go the polls to elect a new European Parliament. In every country, national

issues dominate, while EU matters get second billing. It is commonly assumed that these elections provide an ideal opportunity for a protest vote against sitting governments. Especially in countries where the ruling party joined the coalition in Iraq, their opponents are attempting to capitalize on widespread European disapproval of the US-led war to score points) as we have seen so dramatically from Prodi,s campaign against Berlusconi in Italy.

17. In addition, the Irish Presidency is in the home stretch of efforts to finalize negotiations on a complicated Constitution that aims at streamlining the decision-making apparatus of a Union of 25 Member States. The Irish hope to wrap up before their mandate ends in the last days of June, but the continent,s leaders remain mired in difficult questions of decision-making (what sort of qualified majorities will be applied, and what other issues will still require consensus decision-making). Consumed in this effort, it is not surprising that Irish attention to the US-EU summit at the end of month has been spotty, despite a strong desire to make transatlantic relations a key focus of their Presidency.

18. If this weren't enough on their plates, the EU must still come to grips by the end of the year with one of its most difficult issues: whether to invite Turkey to begin accession negotiations. There is little support for this move among the European electorate, despite the strategic importance of Turkey as a bridge to the neighboring Muslim world -- or the committed progress of the Erdogan government in meeting the Copenhagen political criteria or supporting a settlement in Cyprus. Chris Patten will play a major role in a Commission recommendation due this fall; he is one of Turkey's strongest advocates.

Solana: Secondary on Iraq, Key on ME Peace

19. A source of stability in this period of change is Javier Solana, the EU,s "High Representative for a Common Foreign and Security Policy," who functions as the de facto EU foreign minister. As a synthesizer of the European cacophony, and a voice of the European mainstream, he has no equal on the EU scene. If the constitution talks succeed, they will create a new position that combines Solana's current functions with those of Patten on the Commission, and Solana is likely to be asked to remain on in that role.

10. On Iraq, however, Solana,s role is tangential. After their failure to craft a united position prior to the invasion, the EU wants desperately to speak with one voice in the decisions that will be made on the future. But the EU,s "Big Three" on the Security Council are jealously guarding their own prerogatives. That leaves Solana little room to maneuver. He does not play a decisive role on talks in New York, but he can still make important contributions behind the scenes in his interaction with European leaders. Your approach will be most effective if it blends advocacy with a willingness to listen and take European views into account. In this regard, you can expect Solana to marshall arguments about sovereignty and a lead role for the UN that enjoys broad support in European capitals, but you should also expect him also to test you for areas of flexibility in the US position. He would most certainly welcome your thoughts

11. Solana plays a more pivotal role in Europe,s policies on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict than he does on Iraq. The Contact Group meeting in London helped to paper over continued unease with the U.S. approach announced at the President,s meeting with PM Sharon. The subsequent uncertainty caused by Sharon's failure to gain Likud endorsement for his disengagement plan, as well as the military actions in Rafah, have only reinforced Europe,s concerns that our approach is failing to deliver the hoped-for results. Solana will be anxious to hear where we think the process is leading. He will try to steer the EU to support any steps they believe will get the Road Map back on track.

The Balkans, China Arms, and Iran's Nuclear Program

12. In your talks with Solana, you should also highlight three other areas where he has a keen interest and can play a decisive role: the Balkans, China arms embargo, and Iran. You should acknowledge his pragmatic role in ensuring that the transition from SFOR to an EU-led mission in Bosnia using NATO assets under the Berlin Plus arrangements is proceeding well. He is also likely to express his concerns that the current stalemate in Kosovo is unsustainable.

13. Solana is on record supporting an end to the EU's arms embargo on China. Our lobbying in European capitals has managed to deflect the momentum in favor of this French-led proposal, but it is unclear how much longer some of the countries will hold out. You should make it clear to Solana that our concerns about the impact of such a decision remain,

and that our study of other EU arms export controls indicate they are not a substitute for the current policy.

14. Finally, we will be facing another decision-point in the IAEA on Iran's nuclear program in the near future. Solana was initially ignored by the British-French-German initiative on Iran, but has now adopted it as the EU's and his own. He was grateful for a special intelligence briefing we offered him prior to his visit earlier this year, and accepts that Iranian compliance is far from complete and verifiable. He will waffle on next steps as the EU awaits El-Baradei's next report, but you should press him on next steps should -- as we both expect -- the IAEA be unable to certify a complete and verifiable end to the Iranian enrichment program.

Schnabel